

Summary of T.U. Reports

This report will attempt to summarize the common problems of the various areas of t.u. work and the strengths and weaknesses of the work. In doing so, we may tend toward superficiality because of the varying nature and development of the work areas and because the work, by and large, is not very developed.

The greatest strength seems to be that most comrades have become involved in their areas of work, take the development of their work seriously, have begun to establish some roots and gain some experience and, very often, are being seen increasingly as fighters for the interests of the workers against the companies and within the unions.

They have encouraged, helped to spread, and in many cases, given leadership and organized form to the rank and file fightback and begun to develop a conception of the need for, and possibility of building, a rank and file movement.

On the other hand, experience is still by and large very limited, perspective is still often unclear, and the work is all characterized by the lack of very solid roots among the workers, inability to sustain the momentum of mass activity or to very often effectively initiate mass activity or to consolidate a significant number of active workers.

Summary of Experience.

Out of 20 cadre, 15 are involved in t.u. level work in addition to 2 in China Friendship, 1 in community and 1 in student work.

The areas where the most work has been done by BACU people are in Laborers, Culinary, S.F. Shipyards and E. Bay Shipyards-Machinists ^{and the Molders (P. LaVil.)} Work has also been done in the ~~Molders (De La Vail)~~, ILWU Local 6, an E. Bay Hospital, and an E. Bay tool and die plant. Comrades have been for a shorter time in the Post Office (E. Bay), a good sized box factory and a small shop. All of these could be significant areas of work except the small shop and possibly the tool and die plant.

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Caucuses exist in Laborers, Culinary, S.F. Shipyards. A newsletter is regularly published in Culinary and has been at times in the Laborers. Frequent leafletting has been done in Laborers and Culinary, some in both Shipyard areas and De La Val. There has been the most experience in election in the E.Bay Shipyards work (comrade initiated and ran on a slate), in Culinary involvement in merger and by-law proposals elections and some involvement in elections at DeLaVal and Laborers.

Work has been done around contracts at DeLaVal, the Tool and Die plant and in Laborers and to some extent other places. Some comrades have been or are stewards (E.Bay Shipyards-Machinists, DeLaVal, Local 6/ and at the T&D plant.) Two comrades organized their shops into unions, Local 6 and T&D.

Those who have been stewards felt that holding this position was advantageous to building close ties with workers and for familiarity with union and shop level conditions. Those who participated in election slates felt this was a good forum for us to use in building a broad base or movement around union and plant level issues and ,perhaps, injecting political issues. Election slates are among the plans of comrades in several areas. By-law elections and contracts also have provided a useful forum. Contracts almost always generate a certain amount of concern, if not involvement.

Caucuses can be groups of communists or caucuses can be open and attempt to be mass in character, at least in some level. There is a basis for the latter when people see the need for an organized fightback because of the oppressive nature of the work, discrimination, or/and the union leadership has been exposed to at least some workers as not adequately doing its job.

The caucuses, or at least the solid core of caucuses, have been mostly communists or at least those who have had some involvement with the movement. Each of the caucuses projects having a more mass character as well in the future.

Laborers for Democracy exists on two levels. The core is communists or those open to communism and at times the broader "caucus" has taken on a more mass character. BACU is the main political force in the caucus.

Concerned Culinary Workers is an amalgam of several political groups, (IWK, CL, BACU, ^{probably} NATM,) plus some independents. Laborers and Culinary caucuses have gotten broad support on some issues. Both caucuses see their chief obstacle to moving ahead as lack of a greater and more solid mass base. Relative isolation and an over-abundance of communists has resulted in CCW spending a great deal of time in discussion of strategy while lack of experience makes it difficult to resolve these issues on the basis of practice and move ahead. Previous Laborers' Caucuses floundered around, without as many communists, unable to find the right issues that would effectuate any mass involvement. That has changed to some degree partly because a small unified core was built and partly because times have gotten rougher, causing more contradictions to sharpen within the union.

The caucuses in the Shipyards, (two, one in the union and one along Metal Trades lines,) is mainly communists (BACU&ATM) and in a preparatory stage but aims at a more mass character. Research has been done into the plant and union setup as a basis for work.

Study has been seen as a regular function of the core group in the Laborers but has nevertheless been sporadic. Small informal groups have been involved in study at times in other areas too.

Some broader political actions have been projected or/and taken up in the Laborers. A donation campaign was taken up toward the end of the Viet Nam war with leaflets, table in the hall etc. A proposal to hold a one day work stoppage and protest rally was generally agreed to in one meeting but it was left to the leadership to initiate and they never did (around the Wage-Price Freeze.) The March for Jobs was a demand against the government for jobs that included several other demands such as free child care, take the money

from military and CIA spending, no forced work union busting schemes, oppose the Rodino Bill, ~~and~~ end discrimination and building to serve the needs of the communities. (The last was most important for its educational effect.) (In response to some of these actions, red-baiting seems to be picking up a bit. The March for Jobs was slandered in the press, ~~and~~ the press, police and some union officials called it a PL operation. The E. Bay shipyard worker who ran for office was viciously red-baited by the union bureaucracy. The hotel owners and Culinary union bureaucracy has launched a general on-slaught against CCW. Red-baiting has, of course, always existed to some extent, usually behind the scenes, eg. in the Laborers.)

Overview of Conditions.

While our experience bears out the ^{emphasis} ~~experience~~ in the BACU pamphlet concerning the low level of struggle and of class-consciousness, most comrades noted that struggle had picked up considerably in the recent period (in response to effects of the crisis--unemployment or modernization (speedup scenes) as we also noted in the pamphlet, and that greater awareness of the need for a rank and file fightback was growing, as was openness to political ideas.

The level of consciousness was not considered high anywhere (political) but the t.u. consciousness and t.u. level struggle varied considerably. To some extent this reflected the different outlooks of those in smaller plants or workplaces and those in larger more socialized plants; to some extent it reflected greater consciousness among those in more proletarianized conditions, (Laborers, Shipyards, DeLa Val, maids in Culinary,) and to some extent the union level fightback had developed more in the more corrupt, anti-democratic unions.

(Union level opposition develops more readily in these unions while often it is more possible to raise effectively political or class-wide issues in the more democratic unions such as Local 6, Local 10-Longshore, UAW, some SEIU locals, some Retail Clerks locals, AFSCME and others.)

In almost every instance once struggle began on any level the union bureaucrats began to be recognized as a necessary focus of attack and, in some cases, as the main focus.

The union officials' position seems to be weakening in the face of greater rank and file consciousness and, in some cases, organization and attacks. ~~While/xxx~~ The changing composition of unions has served to undermine some officials' positions. More younger members have entered some unions who are influenced by the politically changing times moreso than most older members. More unions have also taken on a greater third world concentration. Struggles in support of struggles of third world workers and women have often been decisive in upsetting the old balance of forces.

The ruling class is also weakening the bureaucrats' positions by its increased attacks on the rights and conditions of workers. If the r.c. is only going to undermine the base of unions instead of coming through with some crumbs, the officials have to look like they're putting up a fight. The r.c. also knows the officials can't deliver Labor's vote anymore. This phenomenon ^(dumping the T.U. OFFICIALS) was dramatically evident in the S.F. Cityworkers' strike. Some significant realignments could result from this (Labor Party?) as well as many officials going under who can't adapt to changing conditions. ^{THE OFFICIALS USUALLY STILL HAVE THE UPPER HAND, HOWEVER, AND THE GREATER BASE.}

It was evident in the work of many comrades that some headway was being made by attempting to take seriously the immediate and recognized demands and needs of workers and to put forward the need for a unified and organized fight on this basis.

Political exposures and communist propaganda have yet played much less of a roll. Some of us feel that's almost inevitable if we're starting on the level where we have to start but we clearly have to begin thinking about how broader political education can be done and looking for ways in which the struggle can be moved to a higher political level.

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Some steps are that 1) political discussion and study should be encouraged seriously on whatever level possible, 2) communist education as well as many political exposures should be undertaken on a broad level, (a communist newspaper is essential for this,) 3) demands and actions with a broader political focus such as the March for Jobs should be undertaken whenever there is the base to take them up effectively.

Many comrades expressed the need for more over-all theoretical development themselves and for more theoretical clarity, esp. on the relationship of political to economic work, on the part of BACU. Work reports in collectives have been the principal means of support for comrades' work and will probably continue to be.

Some comrades also expressed the need for analysis of the long range direction of their industry or plants; information on their unions and exposures of the activities of their officials; information on contracts, eg. how demands have been taken up in other unions; information on law related to union organizing, rights of workers, and the legality of repressive or anti-communist union rules.

Experience with other orgs. in workplace work has generally confirmed that sectarianism, dogmatism, adventurism and other left errors are the main problem among the Communists. Experience with several of these groups is mixed, however.

ATM seems to play a basically good role in some places, in others an adventurist and amateurish role, tending towards dogmatism, but active in the worker's interests; in others a weak role, vacillating between liberalism and dogmatism.

CLP often plays an active role on a t.u. level, sometimes adventurist but sometimes not bad, but usually its sectarianism and adventurism makes for a destructive role in the final analysis.

RCP doesn't play a very strong role in many areas, they usually tend to stay out of directly union affairs and out of contact with any other communists.

IWK works fairly well with comrades in Culinary and CE has more problems but also isn't bad there.

PL usually plays a very adventurist role.

CP, in Local 6, get the stewards jobs and dampen any struggle wherever possible. SWP is a little more militant on shop issues and tends toward a usually loyal opposition role.

Spartacists are nuts, a source of embarrassment because of their adventurist and badgering role.